

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating the allowability of claims 10-18 in their present form, as well as the allowability of claims 5-8 if rewritten into independent form to include all of the features of base and intervening claims.

In the outstanding Official Action, the drawings were objected-to as being "speckled", and corrected drawings sheets in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121(d) were required in reply to the Official Action. Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over SUDA et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,053,803). Claims 1-4 (and although not specified in the "Claim Rejections" section, presumably claim 9) were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over SUZUKI et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,367,463). Claims 5-8 were objected-to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were otherwise indicated as containing an allowable combination of subject matter if rewritten into independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 10-18 were indicated as allowable.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claim 1 will have been amended to include substantially all of the features previously recited in claim 5. Claim 6 will also have been amended into independent form to include substantially all of the features originally recited in independent claim 1. Claim 5 will have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Accordingly, claims 2-4 and 6-9 will depend, directly or indirectly from claim 1 (which includes a combination of features similar to a combination of features already indicated as allowable by the Examiner).

The herein-contained amendments should not be taken as an indication of Applicants' acquiescence as to the propriety of the rejection of claims 1-4 and 9. Rather, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 6 in order to obtain early allowance of claims in the present application.

Applicants will also have added claims 19-22, which depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 6 (as rewritten into independent form to include a combination of features similar to the combination of features already indicated as allowable by the Examiner). Claims 19-22 recite subject matter similar to the subject matter recited in claims 2-4 and 9.

Applicants will also have amended various of the claims to eliminate informalities. Applicants submit that none of the amendments which eliminate informalities changes the scope of any amended claim.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request submit that each of claims 1 and 6 is allowable, at least because each of claims 1 and 6 include a combination of features similar to a combination of features already indicated as allowable by the Examiner.

Applicants further submit that each of claims 2-4, 7-9 and 19-22 is allowable, at least because each of claims 2-4, 7-9 and 19-22 depends, directly or indirectly from an allowable claim 1 and 6, as well as for additional reasons related to their own recitations. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the outstanding objections and rejections has been rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the outstanding objections and rejections.

Additionally, in response to the Statement of Reasons for Allowance indicated at page 6 of the Official Action, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of claims in the present application. In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indication that certain identified features are not disclosed by the references, Applicants submit that each of the claims in the present application recite a particular combination of features, and that the basis for patentability of each of these claims is based on the totality of the particular features recited therein.

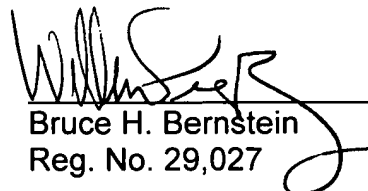
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

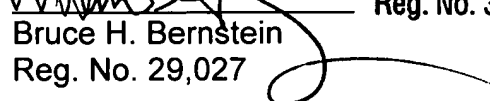
Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so. Applicants have presented a new set of Figures to more clearly show the features therein. Applicants have also amended the claims to cancel rejected claims without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and to place claims indicated as allowable by the Examiner into independent form.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

If there should be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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IN THE FIGURES

Attached hereto, Applicants present a replacement set of Figures. Applicants respectfully submit that the replacement set of Figures is free of the "speckles" which are the basis for the objection to the Figures in the outstanding Official Action. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the Figures in the outstanding Official Action.